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*The Institution of Public Charities.*

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A

# SERMON

Preached at

## CHRIST'S-HOSPITAL,

On WEDNESDAY, *September* 21, 1763.

Before the Right Honourable

## The LORD-MAYOR,

## The PRESIDENTS,

## TREASURERS and GOVERNORS

OF THE SEVERAL

## ROYAL HOSPITALS.

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By PETER WHALLEY, M.A.
Upper Grammar-Master of CHRIST'S-HOSPITAL.

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LONDON:

Printed for JOHN RIVINGTON at the *Bible* and *Crown* in St. *Paul's Church-Yard.* 1763.

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Preached at

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On WEDNESDAY, November 21, 1759,

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The PRESIDENTS,

TREASURERS and GOVERNORS

OF THE ROYAL

ROYAL HOSPITALS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

By PETER WHALLEY, M.A.

Upper Grammar-Master of Christ's Hospital.

LONDON:

To the Right Honourable

WILLIAM BECKFORD, Eſq;
LORD-MAYOR,

To the Right Worſhipful

Sir ROBERT LADBROKE, Knt. PRESIDENT,

The Worſhipful

DANIEL WEBB, Eſq; TREASURER,

AND TO

The Reſt of the GOVERNORS of CHRIST'S-HOSPITAL,

THIS

# SERMON,

Publiſhed at their Requeſt,

Is moſt reſpectfully inſcribed,

by their very obedient

and faithful humble Servant,

Peter Whalley.

To the Right Honourable

WILLIAM BECKFORD, Esq.,

LORD-MAYOR,

To the Right Worshipful

Sir ROBERT LADBROKE, Knt. President,

The Worshipful

DANIEL WEBB, Esq., Treasurer,

AND TO

The Rest of the Governors of Christ's-Hospital,

THIS

# SERMON,

Published at their Request,

In most respectfully inscribed,

by their very obedient

and faithful humble Servant,

Peter Whalley.

## MATTHEW V. 16.

*Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

THE religion of Jeſus Chriſt is a diſpenſation of mercy and truth. Its doctrines command our reverential attention for their importance, with our warmeſt eſteem for their beneficial tendency. It was graciouſly inſtituted to reſtore our fallen nature, and to prepare us for everlaſting happineſs, by the means of duty. Now the duties required by religion are neceſſarily of two kinds; ſuch as we ſhould perform only in private, and ſuch as ſhould be done publicly, and in the ſight of men. And in the performance of both theſe, we muſt be guided by thoſe directions which our Saviour hath

preſcribed us; our diſcharge of them muſt be conformable to the will, and conducive to the glory of God. An oſtentation and art of piety, the goſpel every where diſcountenanceth and condemns. Of private religious duties, the ſecrecy and ſincerity recommend them to the divine approbation: Of public ones, the decency and propriety, with their aptneſs to engage the affections and excite the imitation of others. It is by the viſibility of virtue, that example exerts its influence; promoting the cauſe of goodneſs where it is not to be found; or encouraging and ſupporting it, where it is likely to decay. The merit even of good works will greatly vary, according to their different circumſtances, and the relation in which they are conſidered. In a relative view, the obligation to perform them may be as ſtrong, ariſing from the ſtation, character, or connections of the perſon, as from the quality of the act itſelf. But whatever neceſſity, or whatever obligation we are under, we are farther obliged to ſee,

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that the ends of duty by a faithful execution are effectually anſwered; tempering our zeal with knowledge, and our piety with judgment. Without this care, our beſt actions will loſe much of their utility; will frequently defeat their own intention, whilſt by an unhappy reverſe in the event, they neither prove ſerviceable to men, nor bring honour to God.

If ſome caution is required, *that our good*, according to the apoſtle's admonition, *be not evil ſpoken of*; ſome caution is certainly required, that our good may really produce good; may be attended with all the happy effects it is capable of producing. Now this care and concern can be no where more neceſſary, no where more religiouſly obſerved, than in the performance of ſocial duties, in the exerciſe of a charitable temper, and the execution of public truſts. Theſe are good works which muſt be done, if we do them at all, to be ſeen of men; and their light ſhould ſhine before others, not to confound

and miſlead, but ſo as to guide and direct them in the way; ſo as to reflect luſtre on our virtues, and on that holy religion from which they ſpring.

In the proſecution of this diſcourſe, omitting the conſideration of other ſocial offices, I ſhall confine myſelf to the duty of ſhewing mercy and pity; a duty which the ſcripture emphatically honours with the title of good works; and as not unſuitable to the preſent ſolemnity, ſhall offer ſome reflections on the inſtitution of public charities, with the adminiſtration of them when already inſtituted.

Charity, or univerſal benevolence, diſpoſeth us to promote the good of all men, and particularly to employ our abilities for the relief of the afflicted. But benevolence indiſcriminately univerſal, is in effect a partial benevolence; and compaſſion to individuals, may be often want of charity to the public. The poor, it is true, muſt be maintained, the ſick attended, and the infirm reſtored. Theſe

are indiſpenſable obligations, ſuggeſted by the voice of nature, and injoined by the goſpel. They are obligations which we cannot violate without adding cruelty to our guilt, and injuſtice to our want of humanity. To diſcharge theſe duties therefore as we ought, the objects of our pity ſhould be found truly to deſerve it; ſhould be real objects of chriſtian compaſſion. If they at any time are otherwiſe, we are merciful without charity, and liberal to a very wrong purpoſe; as what is intended by us for the ſervice of neceſſity and alleviation of diſtreſs, will be perverted to the ſupport of idleneſs, or the gratification of vice. For preventing theſe evils what way ſo proper, what method ſo effectual, as that which reaſon and experience have pointed out? Public proviſions for the ſick, the impotent, and lame, as their ſeveral neceſſities require. By theſe proviſions the welfare of the public, and of its poorer members is reciprocally preſerved. The induſtrious artificer is not left to ſink under his burden, without

out hopes of pity, or the proſpect of relief; but when diſabled by caſualty, or languiſhing in ſickneſs, can apply for that aſſiſtance which, as a member of the community, he may juſtly claim. And by this aſſiſtance recruited with new ſtrength and vigour, he will go forth again unto his labour, rejoicing to run the courſe of nature and duty.

By the eſtabliſhment of hoſpitals, a remedy is found for dangerous exigencies, which private benevolence cannot always reach; guarded at the ſame time againſt frauds, impoſitions, and pretences, by which private benevolence is apt to be deceived. But we muſt here obſerve, that theſe compaſſionate eſtabliſhments are wholly owing to the influence of chriſtianity over the hearts of men; of that benign religion which hath refined and ennobled human nature, and whoſe characteriſtic is univerſal charity. You will in vain look for them in the heathen world; in uncultivated and unenlightened ages, when human ſacrifices, the expoſition

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of infants, and dereliction of the aged and infirm were frequent practices *, and even a part of the gentile worſhip. Where chriſtianity ſucceeded, theſe barbarous practices were gradually aboliſhed. A ſpirit of benevolence diffuſed itſelf, which ſoftened the moſt rude and ſavage minds. Hoſpitals were raiſed, and whole orders of men eſtabliſhed for the care of the poor and ſick. In proceſs of time theſe well-meant inſtitutions, depraved by corruptions and abuſes, became leſs beneficial. As popery ſprung up their exceſſes multiplied, and were growing evils †, which demanded regulation and reſtraint. The pollution and diſorders were univerſal, nor could charity itſelf eſcape them. With

* Human victims were offered particularly to *Jupiter Latialis* in the age of *Lactantius* and *Minutius Felix*. *Latialis Jupiter etiam nunc ſanguine humano colitur*. Lactant. l. 1. c. 21. The emperor *Adrian* prohibited them; and *Conſtantine* forbad intirely all ſacrifices whatever.

† The neceſſity of an inquiry into the ſtate of hoſpitals, and of regulating their revenues, was diſcerned in *England* long before the reformation. And by a ſtatute paſſed in 1414, 2 *Hen.* V. the ordinaries were impowered to make ſuch inquiry and regulation within their reſpective dioceſes.

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the beauty of holineſs, the fair face of mercy was equally disfigured; and, ſuperſtition prevailing, compaſſion was made an engine of policy and craft.

The religious houſes, the principal diſpenſers of charity to the poor, were unmeaſureably aſpiring, and aimed only at enriching themſelves. Benefactions for hoſpitable and pious uſes, by augmenting the revenue, chiefly contributed to increaſe the influence and authority of the cloiſter *. The crouds reſorting to the monaſteries, were ſupported, to the bane of induſtry and honeſt labour, in idleneſs and a neglect of their calling; or wandering from convent to convent,

* The conſumption of proviſions in the monaſteries is almoſt incredible. In the priory of *Norwich*, as appears from the cellarer's account, fifteen hundred quarters of malt, above eight hundred quarters of wheat, and all other things in proportion, were generally ſpent every year. They were houſes of entertainment for travellers and ſtrangers. It would be endleſs to recount the impoſtures by which they deluded the people. Let me juſt mention a remarkable one at the very eve of the reformation, the pretended miracles and revelations of *Elizabeth Barton*, the maid of *Kent*, who deceived even two ſuch men as Biſhop *Fiſher* and Sir *Thomas More*. At laſt mingling ſtate affairs with her revelations, ſhe and the monks her accomplices were deſervedly hanged.

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countenanced impoſtures which religion abhors, and committed irregularities which prudent diſcipline could not but puniſh. By the diſſolution however of religious houſes, the cauſe of charity was little promoted. The good that was done, was done by the monaſteries; the poor who were maintained, or the ſick who were recovered, were maintained and recovered by the monaſteries. The charitable aſſiſtance withdrawn from the poor, greatly enlarged their numbers; to which a neglect of hoſpitality, various oppreſſions, with ſucceeding ſcenes of ſpoliation and plunder, conſiderably added. The towns and cities were filled with people who had nothing to do. The metropolis overburdened with vagrants, whoſe lives could only be made comfortable, by being made uſeful and honeſt. At this important criſis the reformation took place; and a plan of charity, the boaſt of human nature, was as wiſely executed as benevolently deſigned *. Purſuant

* See *Holinſhed's Chron.* vol. ii. p. 1082. Immediately after the general ſuppreſſion, the citizens of *London* endeavoured to procure

Purſuant to this deſign a threefold diviſion was made of the poor, comprehending all who from nature or neceſſity were indigent and helpleſs. Such were the poor by impotency of

ſome of the diſſolved monaſteries for the reception and relief of the poor. To this end Sir *Richard Greſham*, lord-mayor in 1537, 29 *Hen.* VIII. applied by letter to the king, for a grant of certain houſes, to be inveſted in the lord-mayor and aldermen for the time being. No mention of this circumſtance occurring in hiſtory, the reader hath here a copy of his letter tranſcribed from the original in the *Britiſh Muſæum*; *MS. Cott. Cleopatra, E.* IV.

Moſt redowted, and puyſant, and noble prynce, my moſt dradd, beloved, and natural ſoveraigne lorde; I your pore humble and moſt obedient ſervaunt, dailly conſideryng and ever more and more perceyvyng, by your vertuus begynnynge and charitable procedynge in all your cawſes, your perſone and majeſtie royall, to be the elected and choſen veſſell of God, by whom not alonly the very and true worde of God is, and ſhall be ſet forthe and accordyng to the trewgth and verytie of the ſame; but alſo to be he whome God hath conſtituted and ordeyned, bothe to redreſſe and reforme all crymes, offences and enormyties, beyng repugnant to his doctryne, or to the detryment of the common welthe, and hurt of the pore people beyng your naturall ſubjects; and farder to foreſee and vigilantly to provyde for the charitable reformation of the ſame; whiche thynge hath and yet dothe encorrage me, and alſo my bownden dutie obligeth me in eſpeciall, beyng moſt unworthy your levetenaunt and mayor of your cytie royall of London, to enforme and advertyſe your moſt gracious highneſs of one thyng in eſpeciall, for the ayde and comfort of the pore, ſyck, blynde, aged, and impotent perſons, beyng not able to helpe theymſelfes, nor havyng no place certen where they may be refreſhed and lodged at, till they be holpen and cured of

of age or underſtanding, as orphans, decrepit perſons, lunatics, and the like: the poor by accident and misfortune, as the wounded, ſick, and diſeaſed; and laſtly, the poor by idleneſs

of theyr diſeaſes and ſycknes. So it is moſt gracious lorde; that here and withyn the cytie of London be iij hoſpytals or ſpitells, called Seynt Maryes Spytell, Seynt Barthilmewes Spytell, and Seynt Thomas Spytell, and the new abbey of Tower Hyll, founded of good devotion by auncient faders, and endowed with great poſſeſſions and rents onely for the releffe, comforte, and helpyng of the pore and impotent people, not beyng able to helpe theymſelfes; and not to the mayntenaunce of chanons, preeſts, and monks to lyve in pleaſure, nothyng regardyng the miſerable people livyng in every ſtrete, offendying every clene perſone paſſyng by the way, with theyr fylthy and naſty ſavours. Wherefore may it pleaſe your marcyful goodneſs enclyned to pytie and compaſſion, for the releffe of Cryſts very images, created to his owne ſimilitude, to order by your high authoritie as ſupreme hed of this chyrche of England, or otherwiſe by your ſage diſcrecion, that your mayor of your cytie of London, and his brethren the aldermen for the time beyng, ſhall and may from henceforthe have the order, diſpoſicion, rule and governaunce bothe of all the lands, tenements and revenewes apperteynyng and belongyng to the ſaid hoſpitalls or any of theym. And then your grace ſhall facilie perceyve that where now a ſmall number of chanons, preeſts and monks be founde for theyre owne profett onely, and not for the utilitie of the realme, a great numbre of the pore, nedy, ſyklye, and indigent perſones ſhall be refreſhed, maynteyned, and comforted, and alſo healed and cured of theyr infirmyties frankly and frely, by phyſicions, ſurgeons, and potycaries, whiche ſhall have ſtipende and ſalarie onely for that purpoſe. So that all impotent perſones not hable to labour ſhall be releved, and all ſturdy beggars not wylling to labour ſhall be punyſhed. For the

idleneſs and unthriftineſs, as vagabonds, riotous ſpenders, looſe, diſorderly, and licentious. Of theſe the firſt were to be maintained, the others relieved, and the latter chaſtiſed and reformed. For the education, cure, and correction of theſe reſpectively, king *Edward* the ſixth of ever memorable

whiche doyng your grace ſhall not alonely meritt highly towarde God, but ſhew yourſelf to be more charitable to the pore then your noble progenitor kyng Edgar foundor of ſo many monaſteryes; or kyng Henry the thyrde renewer of Weſtmynſter; or kyng Edwarde the thyrde foundor of the new abby; or kyng Henry the fyfte foundor of Syon and Shene; but alſo ſhall have the name of conſervatour, protectour, and defendour of the pore people with theyre contynuall prayer for your helthe, welthe, and proſperitie long to endure.

Your humble and moſt obedyent ſervaunt

Rychard Greſham.

St. *Mary*'s ſpittle mentioned in this letter, ſtood without *Biſhopſgate*, where *Spittle-ſquare* now is. In the church-yard belonging to it was a pulpit, where the ſermons in the *Eaſter* holidays, from thence called the ſpittle ſermons, were anciently preached. Adjoining were places for the lord-mayor, aldermen, and ſheriffs with their ladies, and for the governors and children of *Chriſt's-Hoſpital*, who there attended them as they do now at St. *Bride's*. The clear yearly value of its endowment by the ſurvey in the 26 of *Hen.* VIII. amounted to £504 : 12 : 11½. At the time of its ſurrendry were an hundred and eighty beds furniſhed for the receipt of the poor. The new abbey was St. *Mary of Graces*, eaſtward of the Tower, founded by *Edw.* III. in 1350. The ſite of it after the diſſolution was granted in the 34 of *Hen.* VIII. to Sir *Arthur Darcy*. In the place of it is now the Victualling-Office.

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piety endowed the hoſpitals he gave the city; which by the wiſdom of ſucceſſive governors are a laſting honour to the royal munificence that founded, the integrity that conducts, and the liberality that hath improved and adorned them. But in gratitude and juſtice it muſt be always acknowledged, that theſe excellent eſtabliſhments proceeded primarily from the compaſſion of * a venerable prelate; who ſtands foremoſt in the noble army of proteſtant martyrs, and who gave his body

* Dr. *Nicholas Ridley* biſhop of *London*, burnt at *Oxford*, *October* 15, 1555, whoſe life, including the plan and progreſs of the reformation, written by the Rev. Mr. *Ridley* of *Poplar*, is a very elegant and valuable addition to *Engliſh* literature. This pious biſhop preaching at court in king *Edw.* VI. illneſs upon the ſubject of charity, his majeſty after dinner ſent for him; and graciouſly entering into converſation, deſired his farther inſtruction for the diſcharge of the duty. The biſhop thinking it neceſſary to conſult the lord-mayor and citizens upon the occaſion, the king immediately cauſed his letters to be written; and the reſult of the whole buſineſs produced the excellent endowment of theſe hoſpitals, which have diſpenſed their bleſſings to multitudes of diſtreſſed perſons. And may they long continue to do ſo! A commiſſion having been granted about this time for the ſurvey of ſuch church goods as could be ſpared, among other things that came into the king's poſſeſſion was ſtore of linen, of which ſuch as had been found in the dioceſe of *London* the biſhop begged of the king, for the uſe of the poor orphans educated in *Chriſt's-Hoſpital*.

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to be burned, with the ſame charity and zeal with which he reſcued others from deſtruction and death.

To the inſtitution of theſe hoſpitals prejudice hath found nothing to object: in the adminiſtration of them, candour will find every thing to commend and applaud. Public benefits in themſelves, they are more extenſively beneficial by their direction and conduct. Charity without prudence is defective, and the beſt plan uſeleſs without a correſpondent execution. That theſe inſtitutions may poſſeſs the extent of reputation, and degrees of utility, which conſtitute their character, exertions of benevolence, like that which firſt produced them, ſhould animate and enforce their operations. Thus every object ſoliciting and meriting aſſiſtance, within the proper ſphere of charity, will obtain and enjoy it. Not contracted by narrow motives of private intereſt, not vitiated by corrupt, degenerate, or partial views, the deſire of communicating happineſs will be their ruling principle. The

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more effectually to communicate this happineſs, juſt diſtinctions will be made, univerſally declared, and inviolably kept. That deſerving objects may be received, undeſerving ones muſt be neceſſarily rejected. Relief imparted out of compaſſion to him who might procure it by diligence, is a weak indulgence to thoſe who enjoy, and an injury to the neceſſitous who want it. Diſintereſted benevolence, like impartial juſtice, is inflexible and firm; not intimidated by the menaces of power, nor ſeduced from its purſuits by allurements of favour or affection. Its ſole end is the good of the community; fidelity and reſolution the means of attaining it.

In a commercial nation hoſpitals are indiſputably uſeful, becauſe abſolutely requiſite. The more various and extenſive the commerce, or more populous the nation, the greater will ever be the want and utility of hoſpitals. They are not however to be conſidered as retreats for the lazy and inactive;

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as manſions for ſloth and indolence to take their eaſe in. An induſtrious man will always think it his misfortune to owe that livelihood to charity, which he would more gladly acquire by the labour of his hands. And with whatſoever gratitude he receives aſſiſtance, had rather earn his pittance by carefulneſs, than feaſt on the abundant alms of public compaſſion. The proviſions ſupplied by hoſpitals ſhould therefore be temporary and ſucceſſive. By a temporary relief, the laborious poor are with-held no longer from public ſervice than their caſe requires: by a ſucceſſive one greater numbers are benefited, and perſons diſcharged make room for the admiſſion of others. Yet as circumſtances differ, the relief and proviſions themſelves will be likewiſe different. There are caſes, where ſupport and maintenance muſt be continued for many years: where unſeaſonably to withdraw them would deſtroy the very intention of the charity. You will readily ſuppoſe, I mean thoſe objects who through natural

tural inabilities are in no capacity of providing for themſelves. Such is the ſtate of the inſane, deſponding or tormented under the loſs of reaſon; the ſtate of helpleſs infancy, yet apt for no employment of art or labour; the infirmity of age, ſurviving both its ſtrength and knowledge, and equally deſerving aſſiſtance with childhood itſelf. In theſe ſeveral caſes, diſcretion and judgment will determine the expediency and duration of the neceſſary relief.

To benevolence and fidelity muſt be joined a prudent œconomy in the diſpenſation of public charities. Waſte and inattention muſt in every condition be fatally detrimental. The revenues appropriated to neceſſary ſubſiſtence, cannot without breach of truſt be exhauſted in uneſſential expences, or diſſipated in parade and ſhew. Frugality ſupports the functions of charity in their proper vigour: a neceſſary virtue in the application of donations already given, and tending to conciliate the generoſity of future benefactors. There is a

mediocrity in the employment of wealth, as remote from ſordid parſimony as from thoughtleſs profuſion. Nor doth it appear with greater advantage than in the regulation of an income, where dignity ſhould not fall a ſacrifice to illiberal avarice, nor the requiſites of exiſtence to unmeaning oſtentation.

To enlarge upon theſe ſeveral heads by a variety of arguments, neither the ſubject nor the occaſion require me. I would not be thought to dictate or preſcribe: but you will pardon obſervations ſo important to the cauſe of charity, with which the example of your own conduct hath ſupplied me. Permit me principally to remark, in comparing the monaſtic inſtitutions with the hoſpitals of proteſtant foundation, with what ſuperior degrees of eminence, with what nobler luſtre the latter ſhine out and excell. Within the walls of a convent, the flame of charity, unſeen as lamps within the confines of a ſepulchre, had little warmth or light; but brightening with the dawn of reformation it broke forth diffuſive as the ſun,

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foſtering the afflicted, and with its kindly influence giving birth and vigour to innumerable bleſſings. Not devoted as of old to the reception of ſtrolling mendicants or luxurious monks; not calculated to ſequeſter human beings from ſociety, and a commerce with the world, theſe ſtructures were erected for very oppoſite purpoſes: were intended to make the world leſs unhappy, and ſociety more perfect: intended to advance every reaſonable end, and to cultivate every art of life; reſtoring health and ſtrength to the impotent and diſeaſed; protecting orphan infancy from the evils that aſſault, or the temptations that enſnare, and training it up for public ſervice in virtue and ingenuous knowledge.

And theſe bleſſings, not impaired by time, under your ſuperintendency become ſtill more durable, and are diſplayed in a fairer point of view. Whilſt thus amidſt the thanks of an applauding world, you contend by this labour of love for the happineſs of others; how pleaſing to reflect you are providing a never ending

ending happineſs for yourſelves: that when relations ceaſe, and nature fails, an entrance may be miniſtered you into thoſe regions of immortality where charity never faileth; that when the rich and the poor ſhall meet together, everlaſting love will be your labour, and everlaſting joy your reward. Which God grant we may all obtain, &c.

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THE END.